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form. Take, for instance, three-fourths of the landscapes now on the walls of the Academy, and they will seem, to the observant eye, like square bits cut out of an actual landscape—real forms, perhaps, but utterly devoid of that great, yet tender sentiment, which nature presents to all who study her with a loving heart, and in broad and generous appreciation. A true landscape must convey to every spectator that he is a part of it, or, at least, a distinct sense that, somewhere, there is a sentient being who mingles his nature with the unseen but deeply-felt sympathy that forever springs from out the exquisite forms of harmony which make a landscape a perpetual hymn to the glory of the great Architect, whose forms of beauty are for ever and for ever renewed.

In the study of atmospheric effects our landscape artists have made daring strides. They have seized hold of conditions which, until lately, have seemed too *outré* to be grappled with, when in fact it was only the genius which was wanting to harmonize them with the accompanying forms, by the simple but unflinching rules which Nature exemplifies and teaches.

There is much more left to be said, which we shall possibly scatter through the sketches of the studios and the masters whose handicraft suggests so many points, which can hardly be expressed without illustration.

*National Academy of Design.* We have taken a cursory glance at the main hall and the pigeon-holes which contain the annual exhibition of pictures at that institution, and find, amid a host of poor things, many pictures of high merit, which we shall discuss in our next. There is always one work which is the picture of the exhibition, and this year we think it will be found to be, Wier's painting of Parrott's Great Cannon Foundry in "casting" time. It is a difficult subject, broadly and strikingly treated, and is certain to attract universal attention. We shall give it the consideration it so justly merits.

#### EXHIBITION OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY.

As usual on the evening previous to the opening, the National Academy of Design invited their friends to a private view of the Exhibition. We noticed that the Academy had the bad taste to repeat an offense which was very freely commented upon last winter. The Council have again publicly offered their invitations for sale. There is no need to comment upon such a course of conduct—the mere mention of the fact should be sufficient condemnation. If the two or three gentlemen who have the credit of managing the affairs of the Academy showed less desire to turn an honest penny on every occasion, they would be more likely to continue to that institution the reputation for dignity and courtesy which it formerly enjoyed.

The first thing which strikes the eye on entering the Academy galleries should naturally be the pictures on the walls. In the present case, how-

ever, the first thing one sees is the wall itself. The color which has been selected to hang the pictures against is a very beautiful, delicate shade of gray, which is very fine in itself, and contrasts admirably with the deep red tone employed for the base and cornice, but is unfortunately the most damaging tint which could possibly be selected as a back-ground for an oil painting of any description whatever. This unfortunate gray has the well-known property of forcing all pure colors to an unnatural degree of intensity, and at the same time of fouling more or less all broken tints. We need only instance Mr. Gignoux's large landscape, in which the beautiful aerial tones of the distance are converted by opposition of the gray wall into painfully crude blues, while, on the contrary, Mr. Gifford's glowing sky in his large upright picture is forced by the same unfortunate gray wall into hot and artificial-looking tints, which the painter never put there. It is a matter of surprise that the managers of the Academy, who, after so many years' experience of hanging their own pictures, might be supposed to have some practical knowledge of the subject, should have committed a blunder which any respectable house decorator would have avoided. The only simple tint which can be safely used to hang all classes of pictures against, is a very cool and low-toned red, a color which gives equally a glow to warm pictures, and a silvery quality to cool ones.

A certain daily paper has seen fit to class as disappointed painters, Bohemians, and lager-beer drinking critics, all who have written of the Academy from a true point of view, that is, giving credit where it has been due, and condemning the bad, contending that it is the duty of the critic to view everything with a lenient eye, and that the mere painting of a picture—let it be ever so bad—entitles a man to the respect and admiration of the public. Now, this is all wrong, and if persistently persevered in, will do more to ruin the prospects of art in this country than the importation of hundreds of foreign pictures. Young painters will become inflated with unjust praise, while the elder ones will naturally fall into the same error, and all because there is a certain class of men who are so good-natured that they are afraid to speak the truth. We should not have spoken of this, were it not that the tone of art criticism appears to be gradually shaping itself to this style, and we consider it the duty of every true critic, and all who have true interests of Art at heart, to raise up their voices in solemn protestation against an abuse that will, before long, bring down American Art to a level of mediocrity.

The best portraits exhibited are, as usual, those of Mr. Elliott and Mr. Baker. Mr. Elliott's heads are always very fine, and are characterized this year by unusual force of drawing and expression; but he seems, unfortunately, to have fallen into a certain hardness of color, a want of harmony between the lights and shadows of his flesh—a fault which Mr. Elliott himself will see sooner than any critic. His half-length portrait of a boy, in the south room, has hardly any of this quality, and is the finest rendering of boyish expression that we have ever seen. Mr. Baker's heads seem the only portraits in the Academy this year in which the

shadows are correct in color. His portrait of Mr. Elliott is particularly noticeable for all those points which go to make up a fine portrait.

There are other portraits, good, bad and indifferent; of some of these we may speak by-and-by; of the rest, the less said the better.

It seems to us, looking at the subject from a merely common-sense point of view, that two things are absolutely necessary in painting a picture. In the first place, color is the distinctive part in painting; the representation of form, without color, becomes merely a light and shade drawing, and belongs to another department of art; consequently, if a painting fails in color, it fails in its most important element, and the artist should have made, not a painting, but a drawing in black and white chalk, or a model in clay. Color, therefore, is the first requisite in painting. The second requisite in painting, as in all other art, seems to us to be this, that it should look like the thing it is intended to represent. We shall be guided by these two very simple canons in criticism in noticing the pictures in the Academy, so we state them as plainly as possible in the first place.

Nos. 6 and 129, "Designs for Fans on Kid," by Mr. J. W. Ehninger, are both gems in their way, strong in color, free in design, and altogether admirable.

Nos. 34 and 64, two charcoal drawings, by Mr. W. M. Hunt, although somewhat tricky in execution, are very fine in effect.

Nos. 15 and 73, Portraits by Miss Harriet E. Cheney, remind us very pleasantly of the admirable crayon heads of the late Mr. Seth Cheney.

No. 108, "The Suspicious Note," by G. W. Flagg, possesses scarcely a redeeming point. It may well be asked why so many men, not members of the National Academy, who paint really fine pictures, have them hung over doors and in dark corners, when such things as this, painted by Academicians, are hung on the eye-line and in prominent places? The preceding remark might be equally applied to—

No. 115, "Portrait of an Esquimaux Dog," by Mr. W. S. Mount, which is simply curious.

No. 130, "Crayon Portrait," by Mr. John Pope, is a most excellent piece of drawing, and particularly good in expression.

No. 81, "A Stall in the Arms Bazaar at Constantinople," Walter Gould. In this the contrast of color is good, also the details of arms. The attitudes are easy, the drapery graceful and true, but the flesh is poor throughout in color, and hard and wooden in drawing.

No. 53, "View on Wappinger's Creek, near Poughkeepsie, N. Y." F. Rondel. A broad, free landscape; cattle in water well characterized and painted; shadows cool, and reflections just and effective; the atmosphere is good, and the treatment is full of feeling.

Nos. 44 and 45, A. H. Wynant and J. B. Bristol. Two effective bits of color—the one cold, gray and obscure, but full of feeling; the other warm and rich in the last hues of a gorgeous sunset.

There are some good architectural designs in this, the first room.

#### NORTH ROOM.

No. 136, "The Cactus Pithaiza," by Mr. W. J. Hays, is painted with great delicacy and truth; and the humming-bird, which he has introduced, is very brilliant in color.

No. 140, "Cloud Towers," by Mr. E. Benson. Mr. Benson is not a colorist, therefore, in his pictures one can only look for a truthful representation of nature. There are two facts represented in this picture; a point of sand running out into the sea, and a pile of cumulous clouds in the sky. Upon this point of sand Mr. Benson has drawn a solitary figure; but as he has failed to make any distinction between the wet and the dry sand, it must necessarily be supposed that the unfortunate figure will be drenched to the knees by every wave that rushes over, which argues a great want of prudence on the part of the solitary figure, and a great want of prudence on the part of Mr. Benson.

To Mr. Benson's cumulous cloud we have much more serious objections. He has drawn a vast pile of vapor, full of distinct, towering forms, no one of which casts a shadow upon any other part of the cloud, or receives any reflected light. Any one who has ever observed clouds on a summer afternoon will see the falsity of this; and will agree with us that Mr. Benson has studied clouds no more carefully than he has studied figures, solitary or otherwise.

No. 156, "Comfort in Weariness," by Mr. E. Johnson, though containing the gentleman's inevitable chimney, is very fine in color and sentiment.

No. 155, "On the Housatonic River," by Mr. T. A. Richards. Mr. Richards exhibits five pictures, all of which are very well hung, and none none of which are any better than the pictures he usually exhibits.

No. 174, "The Fool and His Shadow," by Mr. M. Oliver, Jr. A badly drawn figure, with an impossible shadow.

No. 175, "The Mill in the Dingle," by Mr. A. F. Bellows, is exquisite in its rendering of summer's greens, and fine in handling. It is altogether one of the best pictures Mr. Bellows has given us.

No. 181, "Pond Lilies," by Mrs. Jane Hunt, is a most delightful piece of flower-painting.

No. 190, "Still Life," by Mr. J. U. Dolph, is very strongly and truthfully painted, and very fine in color.

R. S.

#### ACADEMY OF MUSIC—ITALIAN OPERA.

Halevy's grand opera, "La Juive," was performed at the Academy on Wednesday night to a brilliant, fashionable, and crowded audience. It gives us much pleasure to be able to state that the public is beginning to appreciate the excellence of the opera company which came among us very modestly, and at the time and season of the year when the people had been overdosed with music, but whose merits have translated indifference into enthusiasm. It is a great triumph for Mr. Grau's artists that they have succeeded, despite the *Herald's* second-hand praise, and the evil rumors which had been circulated previous to their arrival. True merit cannot be killed in New York, if it has but a chance to assert itself.

"La Juive" had the following strong cast; Madame Gazzaniga, Mlle. Boschetti, and Signoris Musiani, Anastasi, Milleri, and Muller. The music of this opera does not satisfy us. It sometimes rises to the exigencies of the situations, which are many and powerful, but is not sustained. A fine thought is evolved, but

it is speedily fritted away, and is generally over-instrumented. One fact is patent—there is so much agony in the action that neither Mozart nor Beethoven, nor even Meyerbeer, could sustain strain upon the most vividly intense passions of our nature. Still there are many fine and strong points in "La Juive," and some ensemble pieces grand in their dramatic power.

Madame Gazzaniga revealed in her personation of the Jewess the same high attributes which rendered her Saffo so surpassingly excellent. She unquestionably enters fully into all the emotions of the character she assumes. She makes a study of the motives of action, and seizes hold of the strong points; but does not neglect the details, who serve to make the picture perfect. The situations in "La Juive" are very powerful, and makes a heavy demand upon the physique of the artist, but Gazzaniga manages her voice so well that it is equal to all demands; and her personation of the Jewess, vocally and dramatically, is an unqualified success. We must again express our appreciation of the wonderful improvement she evidences in her vocalization—its smoothness and finish are truly artistic, and she is more admirable in every respect than when she appeared here before.

Boschetti, looked, sang, and acted Eudoxia most charmingly. Her voice was more perfectly under control than upon any previous appearance, and her execution was true, brilliant, and rapid. She is in all respects a most thorough and excellent artist.

Musiani's performance of the Jew was fine, both vocally and dramatically. His interpretation of the Prayer, in the second act, was full of feeling and passionate fervor, and was worthy of all praise. His voice was in excellent order, and was firm and true, only partially wavering once in a passage of great power. Anastasi grows into more favor with each performance. He has a delicious voice, and one that will bear a strain, without losing its purity. He is an earnest and passionate singer and slights no portion of his rôle. We must award him unqualified praise for his vocal and dramatic efforts last season. Milleri fully sustained the high praise we awarded him for his personation of Mephistopheles. He has a magnificent voice, and uses it with admirable skill. He declaims with point and power, and both his acting and his singing are full of grace, passion; and energy. He is by far the most competent basso that has appeared on the stage for some time.

The chorus was in most respects prompt and accurate, and the orchestra executed the partition excellently throughout. Much credit is due to Signor Muzio for the fine performance of Wednesday evening.

Meyerbeer's splendid opera of "L'Africaine" was produced at the Academy of Music last Friday night, before a large and fashionable audience. It is needless at this date to say anything of the music of this wonderful opera. Certain it is that every hearing serves to develop some new, appreciable, though subtle

beauties of melody, construction, or instrumentation. A work of such magnitude cannot be grasped until after many hearings, so absorbing is the interest attached to each department, vocal, and instrumental.

The cast comprised some of the most prominent members of the company, Gazzaniga, Boschetti, Musiani, Orlandini, Milleri, Colletti, &c. It is not our purpose to make any comparison between the respective merits of the artists on the present occasion and the artists on the present occasion and the artists of Mr. Maretzek's company. Both have their special excellencies, and both are deserving of warm commendation and admiration.

The Selika of Gazzaniga, like all that she does, is characterized by strong individuality. She thoroughly enters into the spirit of every character she attempts, and presents a reading which is full of intelligence, earnestness, and passion. Her reading of the slumber song in the second act had all the wild tenderness which the situation calls for and the music expresses. In the fourth act she rendered that wonderfully passionate music with a force and an abandon that was as grandly effective as it was impulsively natural. The whole of the last scene was impressive and full of power in the expression of the varied emotions of the situation—now of hopeless love, of wild despair, of jealous madness, and of resignation.

The whole was a splendid example of vocal and dramatic power.

Mlle. Boschetti made an admirable Inez. She looked the part to perfection, for she is a woman of rare and exquisite beauty, and dresses in unexceptionable taste. She sang the part finely; her voice was fine and her execution was brilliant, true, and telling. She dignified the part, making it a marked feature. Signor Musiani sustained the difficult rôle of Di Gama with great ability. His voice, though lacking that grandeur of tone to which we have been accustomed of late, was ample for all the musical demand, and he sang the music with admirable taste and judgment, and with an energy and power which called forth repeated plaudits. He is a fine actor, and enters thoroughly into the feelings of the character he personates.

Orlandini's Neluska was a spirited and vigorous personation of the jealous but devoted savage. He sang the music with artistic finish and sustained power throughout. Milleri was also an excellent representative of Don Pedro. His noble and well cultivated voice told out with admirable effect, both in solos and concerted music.

The chorus and orchestra in their execution of this music far exceeded our expectations. To many in each department the music was new, but Signor Muzio kept both steadily in hand, and produced a more excellent result than could have been hoped from so hasty a preparation. Much of the orchestral performance was worthy of warm praise, and the exceptionable points were excusable under the circumstances, for we cannot expect such rounded perfection from a passing company.